

treatment and experiment, there is always the possibility of accidents, even though many of them may be only small. The majority will of course occur in highly specialized areas, such as Atomic Energy Authority installations, or in places where radiotherapy takes place, and experts will be on hand to deal with the emergency. There are however, a few occasions when the ordinary general practitioner might be implicated, such as a road accident where radio-active material is being carried. It behoves the general practitioner to have a working knowledge of radio-activity and radiation casualties, so that he may be in a position to allay anxiety and to control the situation so that further contamination will not take place. There is a good chapter on the simple physics of radio-activity, and the effects of radiation on the body, and protective measures are well discussed. There is bound to be a certain amount of repetition in a work of this nature, and the same conditions are discussed under several headings, from slightly different angles, in various chapters. The author rightly stresses the need for a health physics supervision from the start, and the decontamination is somewhat reminiscent of that to be employed in gas casualties, of the mustard gas and lewisite type, but is much more extensive and can be extremely complicated. The fact that radiation and its effects may not be apparent at the time is stressed, and it is important to realize that only the health physics expert can decide how much radiation is present at any particular time, or in any particular place. Knowledge of the effects of radiation is not extensive, and from very small doses is almost entirely unknown. What is known, is the result of a limited experience over a short space of time, and no doubt in years to come a great deal more information will have been acquired, and the treatment will be much more effective. The actual treatment of radiation casualties is highly specialized, and can really only be conducted in a properly equipped hospital.

The book is pleasantly set out, easy to handle, and gives a full description of everything. As knowledge advances it will have to be revised, and no doubt further editions will appear in due course.

The management and nursing of burns. J. ELLSWORTH LAING, M.B., F.R.C.S. and JOYCE HARVEY, S.R.N., S.C.M. London. The English University Press Limited. 1967. Pp. 116. Price 10s. 6d. paper back edition; 17s. 6d. library edition.

The small and very readable book is an extremely valuable teaching manual for nurses but there is much of value for doctors, particularly those working on a burns unit. They cover the whole management of burns, not only in hospital but also the first aid and transport of burned patients. There is an excellent chapter on the prevention of burning injuries. The difficult problems of burns shock and calculation of fluid and electrolyte balances are dealt with clearly and concisely. This is a thoroughly practical book based on the authors' experience in running a burns unit.

A synopsis of public health and social medicine. Second edition. A. J. ESSEX-CATER, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.C.H., D.P.H., D.I.H., F.R.A.I. Bristol. John Wright and Sons Ltd. 1967. Pp. xii + 740. Price 75s. 0d.

Since the first edition of this work was published in 1960, much new legislation on environmental health has been placed on the Statute book. To cover all this has made it necessary to enlarge the book by 150 pages. The Housing Act of 1964 is described fully and the special health and welfare problems arising from the building of high flats are mentioned. This is a most useful reference book and its possession will help the busy practitioner to find out quickly the answer to many of the problems which arise in the conduct of general practice where it impinges on the domain of public health.
